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AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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August 10, 2004

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – RITES OF
PASSAGE RESIDENTIAL CENTER, INC.: WEXHAM AVENUE BOYS
AND SYCAMORE STREET BOYS FACILITIES**

We have completed a review of the two Group Homes (Group Home or Agency) operated by Rites of Passage Residential Center, Inc. Each Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Wexham Avenue Boys (Wexham) and Sycamore Street Boys (Sycamore) are six-bed facilities that provide care for boys ages 9-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Wexham was providing services for four DCFS children, and Sycamore was providing services for six DCFS children. Both facilities are located in the Second District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review was to determine whether the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covered basic child safety and licensing issues, and included an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, facility inspections, and interviews with two children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with the residents were designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

Summary of Findings

Generally, Wexham and Sycamore were providing the services outlined in their Program Statements. However, for one resident, Wexham did not maintain current court authorizations for psychotropic medication.

Attached are detailed reports of the review findings.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. The Agency's management is required to provide a corrective action plan to the Children's Group Home Ombudsman within 15 business days from the receipt of this report. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact DeWitt Roberts at (626) 293-1101.

JTM:DR:CC:jh

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
Richard Shumsky, Chief Probation Officer
Turesi Faniel, Executive Director, Rites of Passage Residential Centers
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**Rites of Passage Residential Center
Wexham
1255 Wexham Way
Inglewood, CA 90302
(310) 671-1908
License No.: 198200103
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Wexham Group Home (Group Home or Agency) is located in a residential neighborhood. The facility is appropriately maintained and blends well with other homes in the neighborhood.

The interior of the Group Home is neat, clean, and nicely furnished. The décor provides a home-like atmosphere. The common rooms are furnished in a stylish yet comfortable manner. The bedrooms are spacious, and the bedspreads are coordinated with the window coverings and the carpet. The residents personalize their rooms with posters, photographs, and other personal items.

The Agency has age-appropriate indoor and outdoor recreational equipment. The outdoor equipment includes weights, a variety of balls, and bikes. Indoor play opportunities include a TV, a VCR, and videos. There is also a TV specifically designated for the video games. In addition, there are table games, books, and magazines. The residents have access to the computer, which has a variety of programs and is DVD compatible.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit. The food is accessible, appropriately dated, and properly stored.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents meet the Agency's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Residents receive complete initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into the Agency's program.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, realistic, measurable, and time specific. The children and their placement workers have the opportunity to participate in developing and updating the NSPs.

The quarterly reports are current, comprehensive, and focused on the goals of the NSPs.

The residents receive individual and group therapy.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Both residents attend regular classes and some Special Education classes at a local school. Their records contain current semester report cards and/or progress reports. Residents reported that they are provided with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school and feel that the Group Home is supportive of their academic progress.

The Agency's program includes the development of residents' daily living skills. The residents are involved in the planning and preparation phase of meals. Hygiene care is discussed as needed and employment preparation encouraged.

Residents are offered the opportunity to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Residents have the opportunity to work and manage their own money.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Agency provides its residents opportunities to participate in recreational activities. The residents expressed satisfaction with the recreational activities and stated that the recreation schedules are followed.

The Group Home utilizes local community organizations for recreational and program resources. The residents reported that they participate in planning some of the activities. The residents have free time and are able to participate in self-selected activities.

Transportation is provided to and from the activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents for one case file

Comments:

The resident prescribed psychotropic medication has a recently expired court authorization. Documentation confirms that the child is routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendation

- 1. Rites of Passage Residential Center management maintain a current court authorization for each child who is prescribed psychotropic medication.**

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents expressed satisfaction with the Agency and its staff. Residents participate in an initial orientation, and the Group Home's policies and procedures are posted. Residents reported that they feel safe in the Group Home and that there is no interference with daily living functions.

Residents reported satisfaction with the taste of the food and with their ability to participate in menu development. They reported that there is sufficient staff supervision and expressed satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with most staff. Residents feel there is at least one staff member they can easily talk to and trust.

The residents report that they are assigned chores to complete on a daily basis that are reasonable and not too demanding. Residents are able to have visitors and make and receive personal telephone calls. They are permitted to contact their social workers, attorneys, and family members as needed. Residents are able to attend weekly religious services of their choice. They feel that the Agency is respectful of their cultural lifestyles and they are allowed to celebrate holidays.

Residents reported that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

The residents are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Agency provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The Group Home supplies its residents with the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance and the residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to residents is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

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The Agency provides residents with the required minimum base allowance, which they are able to increase according to the Agency's behavioral system. Residents are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose.

The Agency provides residents with adequate personal care items and adequate storage.

Residents are provided with an opportunity to maintain photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

**Rites of Passage Residential Center
Sycamore Boys
1617 South Sycamore Street
Los Angeles, CA 90019
323 937-0680
License No.: 198202935
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Sycamore Group Home (Group Home or Agency) is well maintained and blends well with other homes in the neighborhood.

The interior of the Group Home is generally neat, clean, and nicely furnished. The décor provides a home-like atmosphere. The common rooms are appropriately furnished. The resident bedrooms are spacious, nicely furnished, and decorated. The Agency strives to address the children's unique needs. For example, two of the residents who were very neat and studious, were put together as roommates. They had a book shelf in their room and their own alarm clock. The residents personalized their rooms with posters, photographs, and other personal items.

The facility has age-appropriate indoor and outdoor recreational equipment. The outdoor equipment includes a basketball hoop, a variety of balls, and bikes. Indoor play opportunities include a TV for viewing, a VCR, and videos. There is also a TV specifically designated for video games. In addition, there are table games, books, and magazines. The residents have access to the computer, which has a variety of programs and is DVD compatible.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit. The food is accessible, appropriately dated, and properly stored.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents meet the Agency's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Residents received a complete initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into the Agency's program.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, realistic, measurable, and time specific. The children and their placement workers have the opportunity to participate in developing and updating the NSPs.

The quarterly reports are current, comprehensive, and focused on the goals of the NSPs.

The residents are provided with psychological testing, and emotional and developmental counseling as required by the Program Statement. Both residents are receiving individual and group therapy.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

One resident attends regular classes at a local school. The other resident is enrolled in the Conservation Corps working on his GED. Their records contain current semester report cards and/or progress reports. Residents reported that they are provided with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school and feel that the Group Home is supportive of their academic progress.

The Agency's program includes the development of residents' daily living skills. The residents are involved in the planning and preparation phase of meals. Hygiene care is discussed as needed and employment preparation is encouraged.

Residents are offered the opportunity to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Residents have the opportunity to work and manage their own money.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Agency provides its residents opportunities to participate in recreational activities. The residents expressed satisfaction with the recreational activities and stated that the recreation schedules are followed.

The Group Home utilizes local community organizations for recreational and program resources. The residents reported that they participate in planning some of the activities. The residents have free time and are able to participate in self-selected activities.

Transportation is provided to and from the activities.

Recommendations

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Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents for one case file

Comments:

The resident prescribed psychotropic medication has current court authorization. Documentation confirms that the child is routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents expressed satisfaction with the Agency and its staff. Residents participate in an initial orientation, and the Group Home's policies and procedures are posted. Residents reported that they feel safe in the Group Home and that there is no interference with daily living functions.

Residents reported satisfaction with the taste of the food and with their ability to participate in menu development. They reported that there is sufficient staff supervision and expressed satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with most staff. Residents feel there is at least one staff member they can easily talk to and trust.

The residents reported that they are assigned chores to complete on a daily basis that are reasonable and not too demanding. Residents are able to have visitors and make and receive personal telephone calls. They are permitted to contact their social workers, attorneys, and family members as needed. Residents are able to attend weekly religious services of their choice and they feel that the Agency is respectful of their cultural lifestyles and allows them to celebrate holidays.

Residents reported that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

The residents are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Agency provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The Group Home supplies its residents with the required \$50 monthly

clothing allowance and the residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to residents is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Agency provides residents with the required minimum base allowance, which they are able to increase according to the Agency's behavioral system. Residents are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose.

The Agency provides residents with adequate personal care items and adequate storage.

Residents are provided with an opportunity to maintain photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

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